

A dirt path leads through a lush green landscape. Several large, mature trees with dense green foliage stand prominently. The path is reddish-brown and appears to be a natural trail. The background shows more trees and a slightly hilly terrain under a soft, overcast sky.

DO YOU KNOW THESE 10 COMMON TREES?

SWATI SIDHU



How many of these trees can you spot in and around your school campus, home, or neighbourhood?

Do you know their local names? Have you noticed when they flower or fruit? What animals visit them and why? What do we (humans) use them for?





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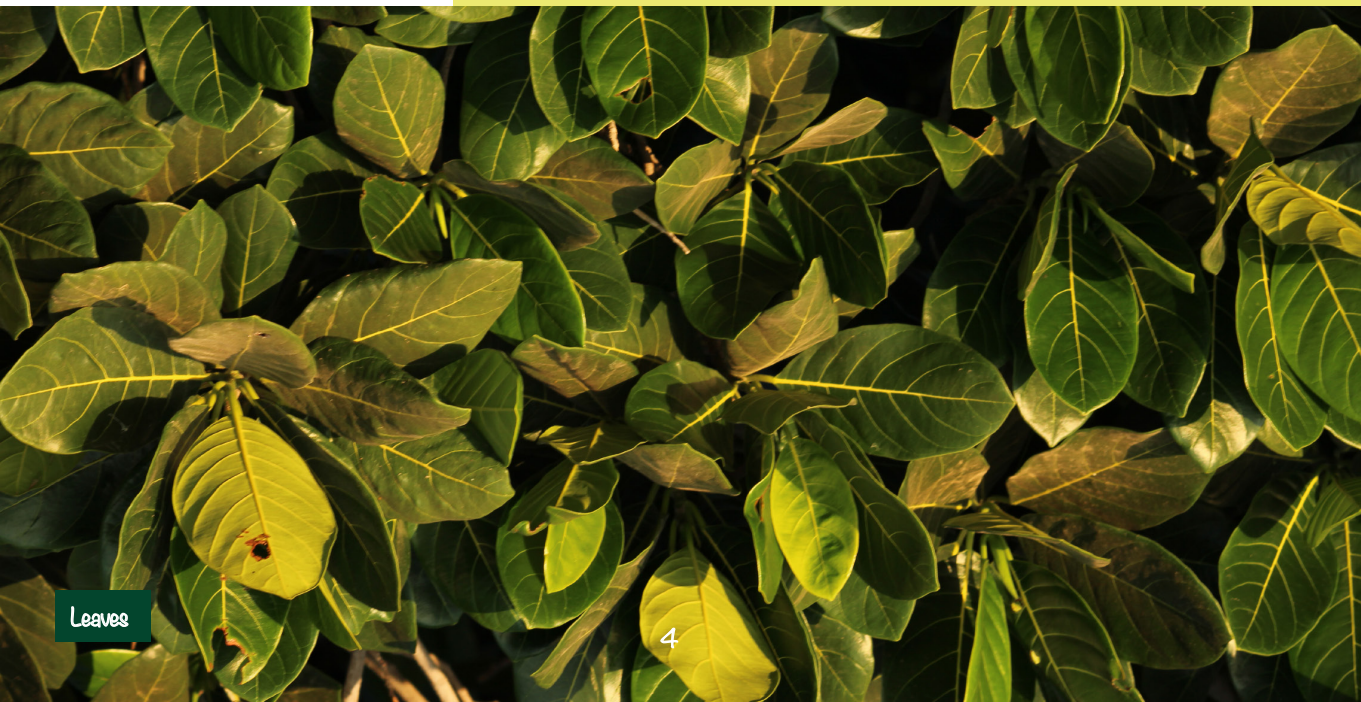




The tree with fruits

Jackfruit

Scientific name : *Artocarpus heterophyllus*
Other names : Katahal (Hindi), Palaa (Tamil),
Halasu (Kannada)
Flowers in : December-March
Fruits in : April-May



Leaves

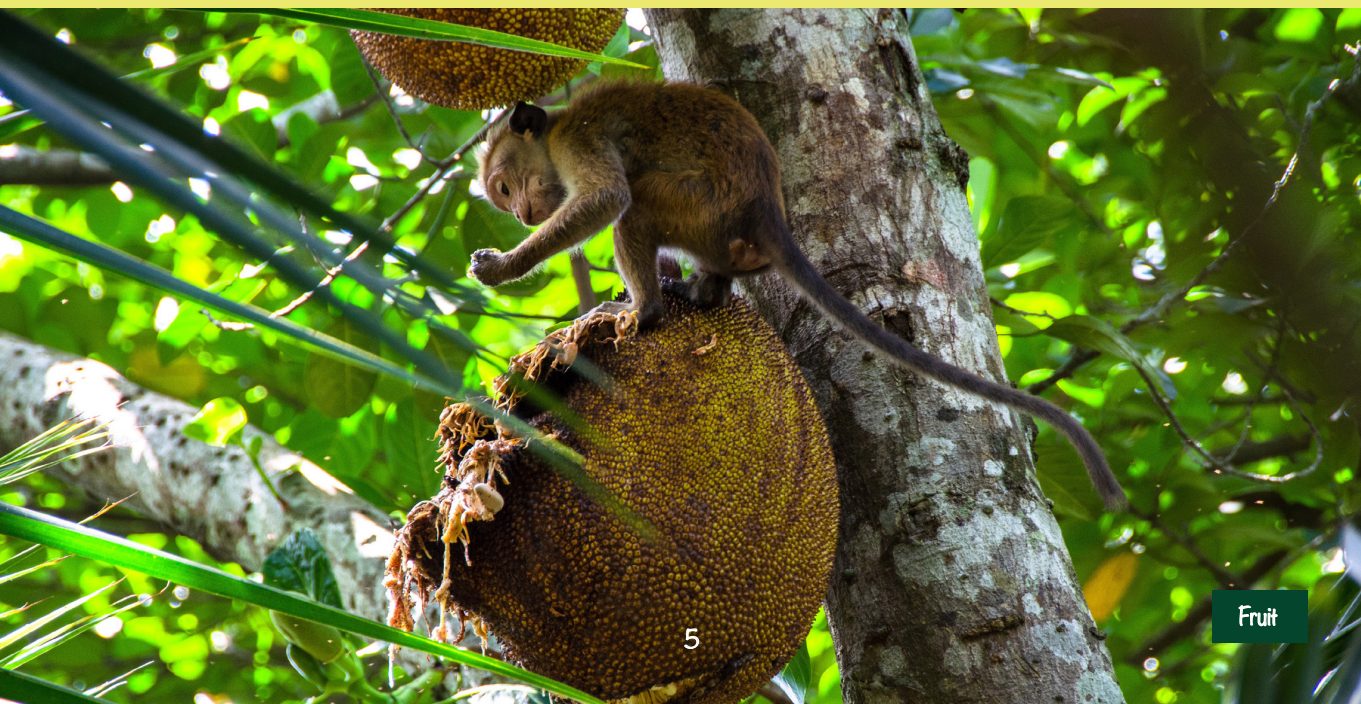


Male inflorescence



Female inflorescence

Have you seen flowers on a jackfruit tree? This tree has male and female flowers, and they both look like miniature fruits. The male flowers have smooth surfaces and are produced on younger branches. You can also see yellow pollen dust on these flowers. Female flowers have a bumpy surface and grow mostly on the main trunk or larger branches. Female flowers develop into fruits, while male flowers turn black and drop off the tree.





The tree

Tamarind

Scientific name : *Tamarindus indica*

Other names : Imli (Hindi), Puliyamaram (Tamil),
Hunse (Kannada)

Flowers in : May-July

Fruits in : December-March



Leaves



Flowers

This large tree has a wide, feathery crown. You must have relished eating the ripe sweet and sour fruits of this tree. But did you know that this tree is originally not from India? Where is it from? Try finding out!



Fruit



Leaves with a leaf spot in one



Leaf galls

Pongam

Scientific name : *Pongamia pinnata*

Other names : Karanj (Hindi), Ponga maram (Tamil),
Hongay maram (Kannada)

Flowers in : March-May

Fruits in : April-June

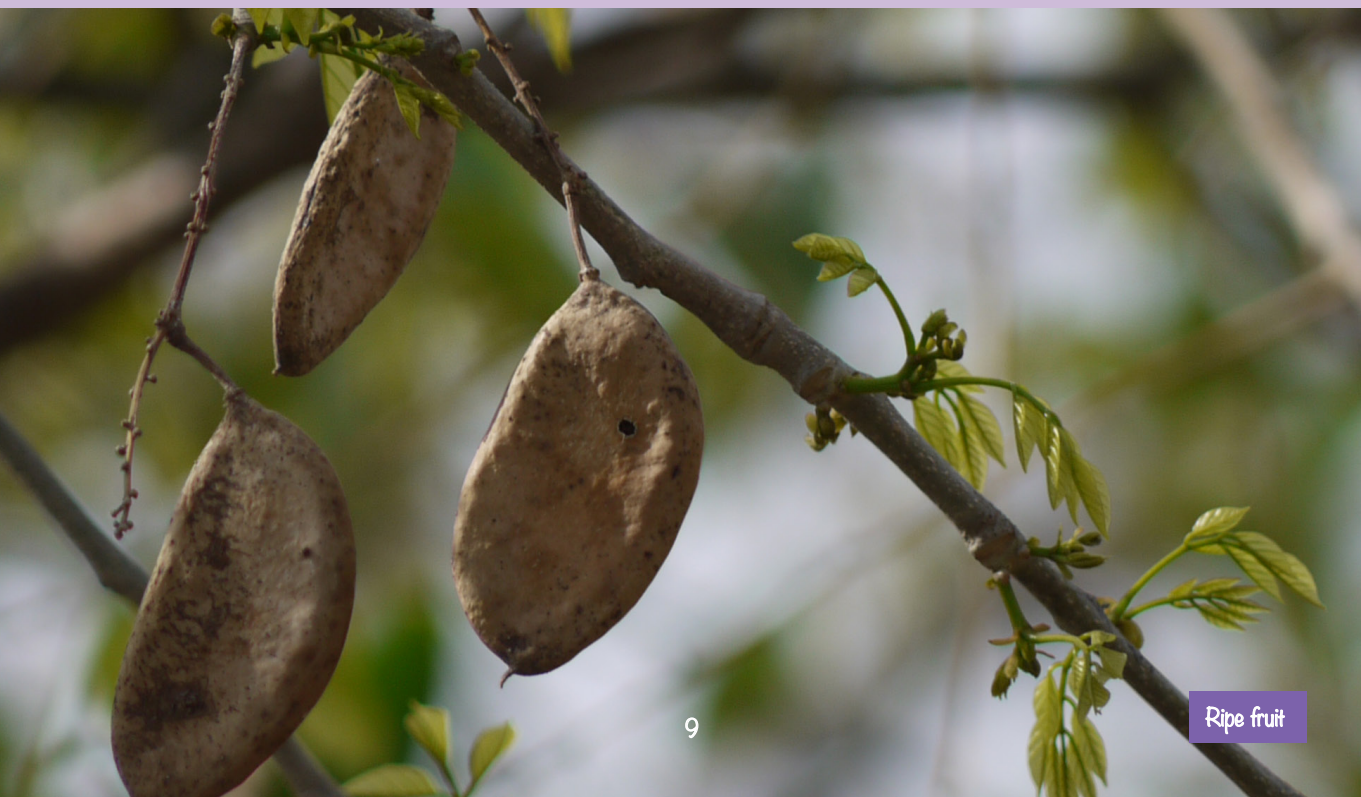


Flowers



Unripe fruit

This tree has a short trunk but a large, dense crown. It is most remarkable when the appearance of fresh, new leaves (in March-April) is quickly followed by flowers. Have you noticed that the mature leaves of this tree may sometimes develop brown or white spots, show white worm-like markings, or look disfigured? The damage to the leaves can be due to fungal infection that cause spotting, or by insects, such as leaf-miners, that tunnel under the leaf surface or result in galls.



Ripe fruit



The tree

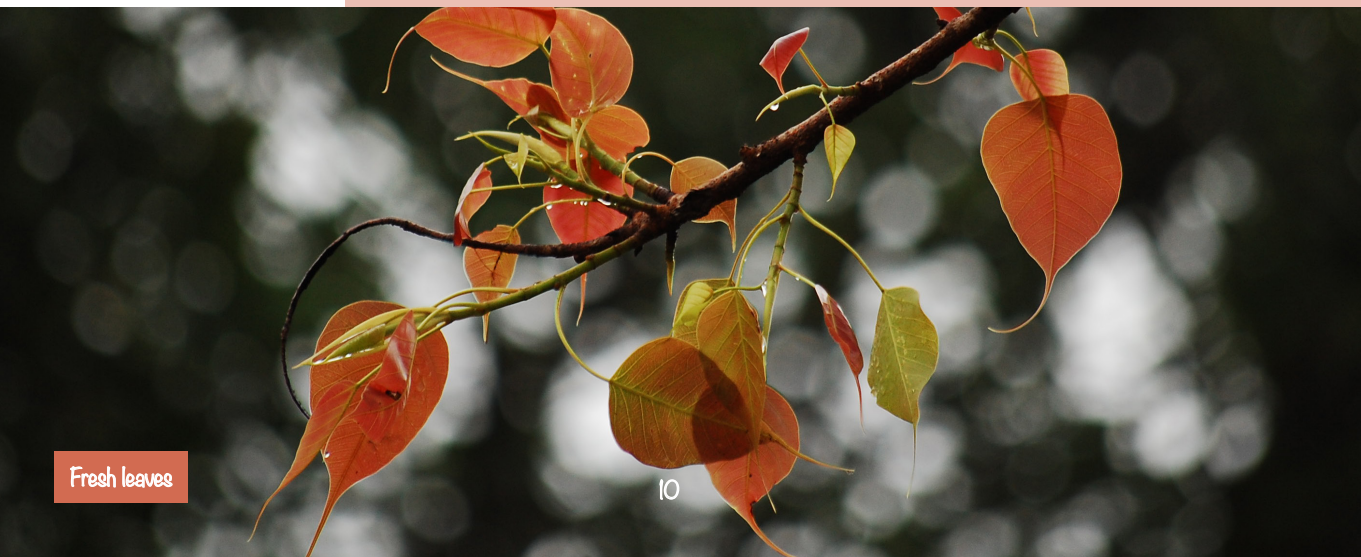
Peepal

Scientific name : *Ficus religiosa*

Other names : Peepal (Hindi), Arasu (Tamil),
Arali (Kannada)

Flowers in : April-May

Fruits in : October-November



Fresh leaves



Fruit

Have you seen the flowers on this tree? Open up a fruit-like green fig and you will see hundreds of flowers inside. These flowers are pollinated by a tiny female wasp that enters by drilling a hole through the fig's skin. Once inside, she pollinates the fig flowers and lays her eggs. Open a ripe red-coloured fruit and check how many insects you see inside.



Mature leaves



The tree



Neem

Scientific name : *Azadirachta indica*
 Other names : Neem (Hindi), Veppa maram
 (Tamil), Kirubevu (Kannada)
 Flowers in : April
 Fruits in : May-June



Leaves



Unripe and ripe fruit

This common tree provides dense shade. Did you know that the neem tree has compound leaves? Each leaf is made up of 4-9 pairs of toothed leaflets. It's flowers are small and white, and open in the afternoons.



Flowers



The tree

Indian Laburnum

Scientific name : *Cassia fistula*
Other names : Amaltas (Hindi), Kondrai
(Tamil), Kakke (Kannada)
Flowers in : April-May
Fruits in : May-June



Leaves



Flowers

This small to medium-sized tree has a thin, spreading canopy. The bright yellow flowers of this tree are arranged in tapering bunches, much like chandeliers. It's fruit is in the form of a long, cylindrical, chocolate-coloured pod that doesn't appear edible, but is loved by bears and monkeys in forests.



Unripe fruit



Ripe fruit



The tree



Sal

Scientific name : *Shorea robusta*

Other names : Saal (Hindi), Ashvakarna
(Kannada)

Flowers in : March-April

Fruits in : June-July

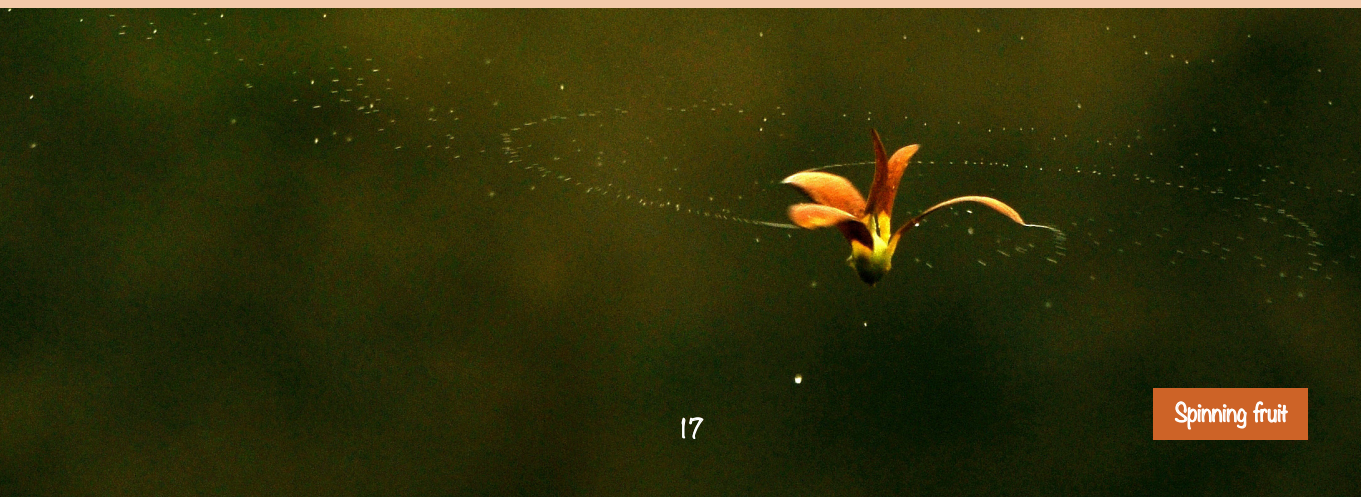


New leaves and flower buds



Mature leaves and flowers

This large tree can grow to a height of 40 m. Each fruit has a single seed attached to five wings. These wings help the fruit to spin when it falls. On windy days, the fruit detaches itself from the parent tree and travels away like a tiny helicopter.



Spinning fruit



The tree in bloom



Babool

Scientific name : *Acacia nilotica*
Other names : Babool (Hindi), Karuvelam (Tamil)
Flowers in : During rains
Fruits in : April-June

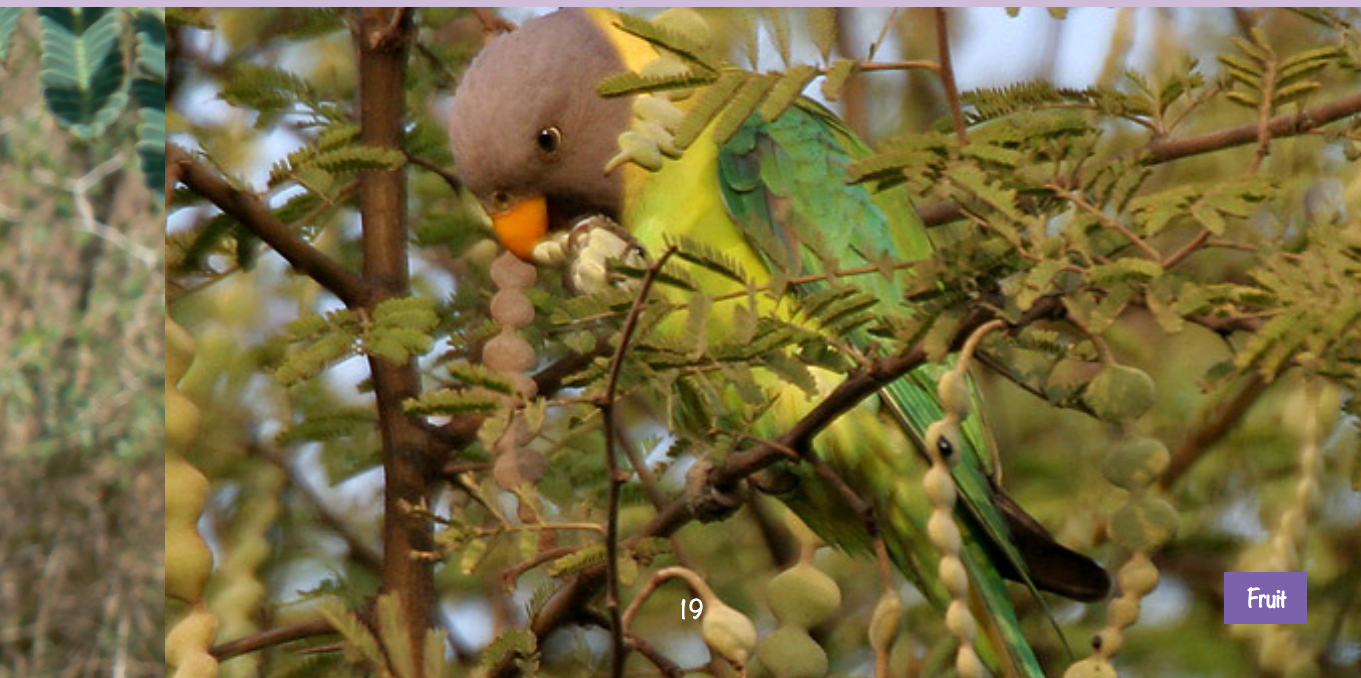


Leaves and spines



Flowers

This tree is often seen growing near village tanks. It has a large, roundish crown covered in feathery leaves. Also, look out for white spines, nearly as long as your thumb, that grow in pairs along its branchlets. Did you know that each yellow pom-pom flower is a collection of hundreds of tiny flowers bunched-up together?





The tree



Leaves, flowers and fruit

Teak

Scientific name : *Tectona grandis*
 Other names : Sagon (Hindi), Thaekku (Tamil)
 Flowers in : July-August
 Fruits in : November-January



Flowers in close-up



Fruit

This is a reasonably tall tree with very large leaves. The crown of the tree is elongated and not very wide. The leaves can be as long as 60 cm and are sandpaper-like to touch. Have you tried rubbing some young leaves between your hands? They leave a blood red stain.



Leaves eaten by teak defoliator larvae



The tree



Purple Bauhinia

Scientific name : *Bauhinia purpurea*

Other names : Kaniar (Hindi), Nilattiruvatti (Tamil),
Devakanchan (Kannada)

Flowers in : October-January

Fruits in : February-April



Leaves and flowers



Flowers in close-up



Unripe fruit

This is a small to medium-size tree. The leaves have two equal lobes joined at one end – shaped like a butterfly. Its flowers have non-overlapping petals with different patterns. The fruit is a long pod that, when ripe, opens with a ‘pop’ sound to release seeds.



Ripe fruit



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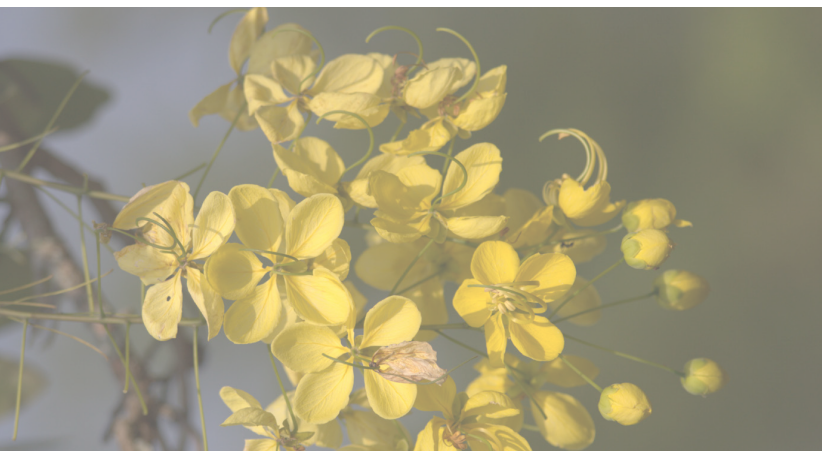
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Resources:

1. Pradip Krishen, *Jungle Trees of Central India* for species related information.
2. India Biodiversity Portal for vernacular names.

Contributed by: **Swati Sidhu** who works with SeasonWatch, a citizen science project that monitors tree phenology in India. She can be contacted at swati@ncf-india.org.

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Your Observations

